

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 IO-14 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01

DRC-01 /135 W

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R 201842Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0512

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

USNAVCOMMSTA LONDON DERRY

AMCONSUL BELFAST

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, U. K. (N. I.)

SUBJECT: DEEPER POLARIZATION OVER SUNNINGDALE

FOLLOWING TRANSMITTED BY CONSULATE GENERAL BELFAST:

BEGIN SUMMARY SOUNDLY DEFEATED IN ASSEMBLY DEBATE ON
"RENEGOTIATION" OF NI CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS,
LOYALISTS HAVE LAUNCHED GENERAL STRIKE WHICH HAS
SERIOUSLY DISRUPTED NI'S ECONOMIC LIFE, BUT SEEMS
POLITICALLY COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. MEANWHILE, EXECUTIVE WILL
MEET WITH NI SECSTATE MAY 17, APPARENTLY TO SEEK
AGREEMENT ON PHASED IMPLEMENTATION OF SUNNINGDALE
AGREEMENT. POLARIZATION BETWEEN LOYALISTS AND
SUNNINGDALE PARTIES IS BECOMING DEEPER AND MORE RIGID.
END SUMMARY

1. ASSEMBLY MAY 14 CONCLUDED LONG-ADJOURNED ASSEMBLY
DEBATE ON UNITED UNIONIST MOTION CALLING FOR RENEGOTIAT-
ION OF NI CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS IN VIEW OF THEIR
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REJECTION BY NI PEOPLE AT POLLS FEB 28, AND EXECUTIVE

AMENDMENT EXPRESSING CONFIDENCE IN PROPERLY-IMPLEMENTED SUNNINGDALE. BOTH SIDES SPURNED ELOQUENT PLEA BY LONE NI LABOUR ASSEMBLYMAN BLEAKLEY FOR HIS COMPROMISE AMENDMENT SUPPORTING POWER-SHARING AND NORTH-SOUTH COOPERATION. LEADERS OF (LOYALIST) ULSTER WORKERS' COUNCIL (UWC), WHICH HAD THREATENED GENERAL STRIKE AND ELECTRIC POWER CUTS UNLESS ASSEMBLY REJECTED SUNNINGDALE, WATCHED FROM PUBLIC GALLERY AS (FAULKNER) UNIONIST AND ALLIANCE ASSEMBLYMEN VOTED SOLIDLY WITH SDLP TO DEFEAT UNITED UNIONISTS, 44-28.

2. UWC IMMEDIATELY CALLED STRIKE. MAY 15 MANY LOYALIST WORKERS IN BELFAST, LARNE AND PORTADOWN STAYED HOME VOLUNTARILY, WHILE 40 PER CENT ELECTRIC REDUCTION AND INTIMIDATION CAUSED FURTHER ECONOMIC DISRUPTION. IN MIDNIGHT TALKS MINISTER OF STATE ORME STONEWALLED LOYALIST DEMANDS FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RENEGOTIATION AND NEW ASSEMBLY ELECTION. COMPLETE SHUTDOWN OF ELECTRIC POWER WAS NARROWLY AVERTED, BUT TODAY (MAY 16) POWER CUTS CONTINUE, AND FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS WITH ORME ARE SCHEDULED MAY 17. PRO-EXECUTIVE POLITICIANS AND TRADE UNIONISTS AND INDUSTRIALISTS CONDEMNED THE STRIKE; LOYALIST POLITICIANS WERE DIVIDED ABOUT ITS WISDOM SINCE LOYALIST PEOPLE ARE SUFFERING JUST AS MUCH INCONVENIENCE AS ANYONE ELSE. (UNIONIST) NEWS LETTER REGRETTED STRIKE BUT SAID LOYALISTS HAD EXHAUSTED CONSTITUTIONAL MEANS OF EXPRESSING VIEWS.

3. MEANWHILE, EXECUTIVE WILL MEET NI SECSTATE MAY 17 TO CONTINUE SEEKING AGREEMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF SUNNINGDALE AGREEMENT. SOURCE CLOSE TO EXECUTIVE TOLD US MAY 15 THAT EXECUTIVE COULD NOT CONTINUE INDEFINITELY IN PRESENT STATE OF AMBIGUITY, AND HAD EITHER TO REACH AGREEMENT ON IMPLEMENTING SUNNINGDALE OR ELSE BREAK UP. SOURCE REFUSED TO BE DRAWN ON OUTLINES FOR

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IMPLEMENTATION, BUT HE SAID SUNNINGDALE DESCRIBES DESIRABLE IDEAL WHICH COULD BE REACHED IN STAGES BY CONSENT OF SIGNATORIES. SPECIFICALLY, HE AGREED WITH CONSUL THAT IT PERMITS APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, FOLLOWED BY IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICING PROVISIONS, BEFORE FORMAL RATIFICATION CONFERENCE AND CREATION OF ADDITIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF COUNCIL OF IRELAND. SOURCE THOUGHT DETENTION WAS MORE URGENT ISSUE FOR SDLP THAN EXECUTIVE POWERS FOR COUNCIL OF IRELAND. HE SAID CRUCIAL QUESTION WAS WHETHER EXECUTIVE PARTIES COULD AGREE; IF SO DUBLIN OR LONDON WOULD NOT CREATE OBSTACLES. HE ADMITTED TO ALTERNATING PERIODS OF OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR SETTLEMENT.

4. COMMENTS:

A. ASSEMBLY VOTE DEMONSTRATED SOLIDARITY OF NEW UNIONIST ASSEMBLY PARTY BEHIND EXECUTIVE, BUT ALSO A DEGREE OF POLARIZATION BETWEEN EXECUTIVE AND UNITED UNIONISTS
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WHICH BODES ILL FOR PROSPECTS OF ULTIMATE WIDESPREAD ACCEPTABILITY OF NI POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS.

B. WHILE SHARING UWC'S POLITICAL OBJECTIVES AND FRUSTRATION AT FAILURE OF CONSTITUTIONAL METHODS TO ACHIEVE THEM, MOST LOYALISTS PROBABLY REGARD UWC'S STRIKE AS COUNTERPRODUCTIVE, AND THEREFORE IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT STRIKE WILL SOMEHOW BE ENDED IN A FEW DAYS IF EVERYONE KEEPS HIS COOL. BUT SO LONG AS HMG AND EXECUTIVE REJECT LOYALIST DEMANDS OUTRIGHT, LATTER WILL CONTINUE EXPERIMENTATION WITH EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY SANCTIONS.

C. EXECUTIVE IS DETERMINED TO SURVIVE AND THEREFORE TO AGREE ON IMPLEMENTING SUNNINGDALE. APPARENT OUTLINES OF PHASED IMPLEMENTATION LOOK VIABLE TO US IN INTRA-EXECUTIVE TERMS, THOUGH OF COURSE UNACCEPTABLE TO LOYALISTS AND REPUBLICANS.

D. SUNNINGDALE PARTIES AND LOYALISTS MUST SHARE BLAME FOR CURRENT POLITICAL POLARIZATION IN NI. PREOCCUPIED WITH PRESERVATION OF SUNNINGDALE "PACKAGE," SUNNINGDALE PARTIES HAVE PUBLICLY DISMISSED OUT OF HAND THE LOYALIST FEBRUARY ELECTION VICTORY. AND LOYALISTS HAVE MISINTERPRETED THAT VICTORY AS MANDATE FOR WHOLESALE "RENEGOTIATION" OF CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS.

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